1. (AMENDED) A method of allocating and scheduling requirements for agents in a skills-based contact center environment organized into a hierarchy of one or more business units at a first level, one or more contact types at a second level, and one or more management units at a third level, comprising:

creating a set of contact allocations that define how contacts are distributed from a given business unit to multiple call types;

creating a set of requirement allocations that define how agent requirements are distributed from a call type to one or more management units; and

allocating forecasted contacts and forecasted agent requirements based on the created contact and requirement allocations.

2. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the created contact allocations are at least minimum contact allocations, wherein the minimum contact allocations are defined by a user.

3. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 2 wherein the created requirement allocations are minimum agent requirement allocations.

4. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the created contact allocations are at most maximum contact allocations, wherein the maximum contact allocations are defined by a user.

5. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 4 wherein the created requirement allocations are maximum agent requirement allocations.

6. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the created contact allocations are from the minimum to the maximum contact allocations, wherein the minimum and maximum contact allocations are defined by a user.

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7. (AMENDED) The method as described in Claim 6 wherein the created requirement allocations are minimum and maximum agent requirement allocations.

8. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the allocating step allocates forecasted contacts and forecasted requirements using agent availability data.

9. The method as described in Claim 8 further including the step of predicting the agent availability data.

10. The method as described in Claim 9 wherein the agent availability data is predicted by a schedule simulation.

11. The method as described in Claim 8 wherein the agent availability data is ~~characterized by contact type.~~

12. The method as described in Claim 1 further including the step of generating agent schedules for the management units.

13. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein a management unit is a collection of agents located at a given contact center location.

14. The method as described in Claim 13 wherein at least some agents in a management unit are multi-skilled.

15. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the contact center environment is a telephone call center.

16. The method as described in Claim 1 wherein the contact center environment is a contact center that handles a contact selected from the group consisting of: telephone calls, voice

mails, emails, faxes, mail, web callback requests, web chats, web voice calls, web video calls and outbound calls.

17. A method of allocating and scheduling in a skills-based call center environment, comprising:

organizing the call center environment into a hierarchy of one or more business units at a first level, one or more call types at a second level, and a set of one or more management units at a third level;

having a user create a set of given call allocations that define how calls are distributed from a given business unit to multiple call types;

having the user create a set of given requirement allocations that define how agent requirements are distributed from a call type to one or more management units;

predicting agent availability by call type to generate agent availability data; and

allocating forecasted calls and forecasted agent requirements based on the given call and requirement allocations and the agent availability data.

18. The method as described in Claim 17 wherein the agent availability data is predicted using a schedule simulator.

19. The method as described in Claim 17 wherein the given call allocations and the given requirement allocations are minimum values.

20. The method as described in Claim 17 wherein the given call allocations and the given requirement allocations are maximum values.

21. The method as described in Claim 17 wherein the given call allocations and the given requirement allocations are minimum and maximum values.

Pat B1 22. An allocation method operative in a skills-based call center environment, comprising:

organizing the call center environment into a hierarchy of one or more business units at a first level, one or more call types at a second level, and a set of one or more management units at a third level;

allocating a percentage of incoming calls from a given business unit to one or more call types; and

allocating agent requirements for a given call type to one or more management units.

23. The method as described in Claim 22 wherein a given management unit is a collection of agents at least some of which are multi-skilled.

24. The method as described in Claim 22 wherein a given call type is associated with a given automatic call distributor (ACD).

25. The method as described in Claim 22 wherein the step of allocating agent requirements further include predicting agent availability data using a schedule simulation.

Pat B1 26. (AMENDED) An allocation method operative in a skills-based contact center environment, comprising:

a2 organizing the contact center environment into a hierarchy of zero or more business units at a first level, one or more contact types at a second level, and a set of one or more management units at a third level;

allocating a percentage of contacts from a given business unit to one or more call types; and

allocating agent requirements for the one or more contact types to one or more management units.

27. The method as described in Claim 26 wherein a given management unit is a collection of agents at least some of which are multi-skilled.

28. The method as described in Claim 26 wherein a given contact type is associated with a given automatic work distributor.

29. The method as described in claim 26 wherein the step of allocating agent requirements further include predicting agent availability data using a schedule simulation.

30. An allocation method operative in a work environment organized into a hierarchy of one or more task types at a first level, and a set of one or more management units at a second level, comprising:

creating a set of given requirement allocations that define how agent requirements are distributed from a task type to one or more management units;

predicting agent availability by task type to generate agent availability data; and

allocating forecasted agent requirements based on the given requirement allocations and the agent availability data.

31. The method as described in Claim 30 wherein a given management unit is a collection of agents at least some of which are multi-skilled.

32. The method as described in Claim 30 wherein the step of predicting agent availability uses a schedule simulation.